

John Introduction

THE BOTTOM LINE

This book will help you see Jesus as the divine Son of God. He may have been an ordinary man in appearance, but no other religious leader ever did the things he did, or claimed to be God in human form as he did. After he died, he did what was only possible for God to do—he came back to life and appeared to many witnesses. If you want to know God personally, only Jesus can “introduce” you to him (see chapter 14, verse 6 [page 141]).

CENTRAL IDEAS

- Jesus was at the same time both totally human and totally divine.
- Jesus showed his power through miracles.
- Most of the disagreements people had with Jesus were not about his teaching, but about his claims to be God.
- We must get to know the real Jesus because only he has the power to forgive us and lead us to God.

OUTLINE

1. **Prologue** (1:1–18)
2. **Beginnings of Jesus’ ministry** (1:19–51)
3. **Jesus’ public ministry: signs and discourses** (chaps. 2–11)
4. **Jesus’ final week** (chaps. 12–19)
5. **Jesus’ resurrection** (20:1–29)
6. **Statement of purpose** (20:30–31)
7. **Epilogue** (chap. 21)

TITLE

This book is named after John, the disciple of Jesus who wrote this Gospel.

AUTHOR AND READERS

John was one of Jesus’ youngest followers; he lived the longest of any of Jesus’ close associates after Jesus ascended to heaven. The original readers of John’s book were mostly non-Jewish people who were being confused by Greek philosophies that contradicted the fact of Christ’s divine and human nature. John tells us exactly why he wrote this book in chapter 20, verse 31 (page 152): “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

⁵⁰Jesus said, “You believe^a because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.”⁵¹He then added, “Very truly I tell you,^b you^b will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’^c the Son of Man.”

Jesus Changes Water into Wine

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

⁴“Woman,^d why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”

⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.^e

⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so,⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside¹⁰ and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

¹¹What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples put their faith in him.

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!”¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”^f

¹⁸The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”

¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

²⁰They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?”²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

²³Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name.[§]²⁴ But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people.²⁵ He did not need human testimony about them, for he knew what was in them.

Reasons to Believe

2:1–11 // The Incomparable Jesus. Like all of Jesus’ supernatural activities, this first miracle had obvious practical benefits—in this case, providing for this wedding’s festivities and protecting the host from embarrassment.

But the main reason Jesus did miracles—and the primary reason John records them—is because of their value as “signposts” that point to Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus used his supernatural abilities to draw people to his person, not to his power. He desires that we do what the disciples did—put our faith (trust) in him.

^a 50 Or *Do you believe . . . ?* ^b 51 The Greek is plural. ^c 51 Gen. 28:12 ^d 4 The Greek for *Woman* does not denote any disrespect. ^e 6 Or from about 75 to about 115 liters
^f 17 Psalm 69:9 [§] 23 Or *in him*